

## Technical Notes

### National Surveillance for Tuberculosis

All reporting areas (i.e., the 50 states, the District of Columbia, New York City, Puerto Rico, and other U.S. jurisdictions in the Pacific and Caribbean) report tuberculosis (TB) cases to CDC using a standard case report form, Report of a Verified Case of Tuberculosis (RVCT).<sup>1</sup> Reported TB cases are verified according to the TB case definition for public health surveillance (*MMWR* 1997;46[No. RR-10]:40-1). Cases may be verified using the laboratory or clinical case definition. A case may be verified by the laboratory case definition either by (1) isolation of *M. tuberculosis* from a clinical specimen, OR (2) demonstration of acid-fast bacilli (AFB) in a clinical specimen when a culture has not been or cannot be obtained. A case may be verified by the clinical case definition in the presence of ALL of the following clinical criteria: (a) a positive tuberculin skin test result, (b) other signs and symptoms compatible with TB, such as an abnormal, unstable (worsening or improving) chest radiograph, or clinical evidence of current disease, (c) treatment with two or more antituberculosis medications, and (d) a completed diagnostic evaluation. When patients are diagnosed with TB but do not meet the case definition (e.g., anergic patients with a clinical picture consistent with TB but without laboratory evidence of *M. tuberculosis*), reporting areas also have the option of verifying TB cases based on provider diagnosis.

In January 1993, in conjunction with state and local health departments, CDC implemented an expanded surveillance system for TB to collect additional data to better monitor and target groups at risk for TB disease, to estimate and follow the extent of drug-resistant TB, and to evaluate outcomes of TB cases. The RVCT form for reporting TB cases was revised to collect information on occupation, the initial drug regimen, human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) test results, history of substance abuse and homelessness, and residence in correctional or long-term care facilities at the time of diagnosis. RVCT Follow Up Report-1 was added to collect drug susceptibility results for the initial *M. tuberculosis* isolate from patients with culture-positive disease. To evaluate the outcomes of TB therapy, RVCT Follow Up Report-2 was added to collect information on the reason and date therapy was stopped, the type of health care provider, sputum culture conversion, the use of directly observed therapy, and the results of drug susceptibility testing for the final *M. tuberculosis* isolate from patients with culture-positive disease. Since 1993, RVCT data have been reported to CDC using software specifically developed for expanded TB surveillance (i.e., SURVS-TB, 1993-1997; TIMS, 1998). Instructions for completing the RVCT forms and definitions for all data items were included in the software user's guide. Summary data presented for 1998 TB cases in this publication (and for 1996 cases, Tables 24-26) were received at CDC via TIMS by June 3, 1999.

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<sup>1</sup>Other U.S. jurisdictions include Guam, American Samoa, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of Palau, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. RVCT data for 1998 were available only for Guam.

## Completion of Tuberculosis Therapy

Table 26 is a recent addition to this publication and presents rates of completion of TB therapy (COT) by reporting area. Data collected by RVCT Follow Up Report-2 on date and reason therapy stopped (e.g., patient completed therapy, moved, was lost) were used to calculate rates of COT. Cases were stratified by the indicated length of therapy based on current American Thoracic Society/CDC treatment guidelines<sup>2</sup> and the patient's initial drug susceptibility test results, age, and site of disease. The adequacy of the treatment regimen (e.g., the sufficiency of the duration of therapy, the appropriateness of the prescribed TB drugs) was not evaluated in this analysis. Acquired drug resistance during therapy with the need for a longer duration of therapy was also not considered in this analysis.

The first column shows the total number of cases reported during 1996. The remaining columns are grouped under three headings: therapy of 1 year or less indicated, therapy greater than 1 year indicated, and overall. Patients with an initial isolate resistant to rifampin and pediatric patients (age under 15 years old) with meningeal, bone or joint, or miliary disease were included under the category of greater than 1 year of therapy indicated. All other patients, including those with culture-negative disease, an unknown culture status, and those with culture-positive disease but unknown initial drug susceptibility test results, were included under the category of 1 year or less of therapy indicated.

Each group for an indicated length of therapy has an initial column showing the number of cases in persons who were alive at diagnosis and prescribed an initial regimen of one or more drugs, and who did not die during therapy. This number was used as the denominator in COT rate calculations. COT rates, shown as percentages, were only calculated for reporting areas that had information on reason therapy stopped for at least 90% of cases shown in the overall column. For the group with an indicated length of therapy 1 year or less, rates are shown for both completion of therapy in 1 year or less (COT  $\leq 1$  year) and for COT, regardless of duration of therapy (i.e., duration of therapy  $\leq 1$  year,  $>1$  year, or unknown). For COT  $\leq 1$  year, the numerator included only those patients completing therapy in  $\leq 365$  days (based on the dates therapy started and stopped). Patients with missing dates were classified as "treatment not completed" for this calculation. Rates of COT, regardless of duration of therapy, were calculated by dividing the number of patients reported as having completed therapy by the number of patients listed in the first column of each group. Patients with an outcome other than completed therapy (i.e., moved, lost, refused treatment, and other) were classified as "treatment not completed." Patients with an unknown outcome were also classified as "treatment not completed." For the remaining two groups of indicated therapy length (greater than 1 year and overall), only rates of COT, regardless of duration of therapy, are presented.

*Acknowledgment: Table 26 was developed in collaboration with the Field Services Branch, Division of Tuberculosis Elimination, CDC.*

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<sup>2</sup>ATS/CDC. Treatment of tuberculosis and tuberculosis infection in adults and children. *Am J Respir Crit Care Med* 1994;149:1359-74.

## Site of TB Disease

Tables 12, 13, and 29 and Figure 6 reflect a recent change in the definition of miliary disease used in this publication. Miliary disease is now classified as both an extrapulmonary and a pulmonary form of TB. In publications prior to 1997, miliary disease was classified as extrapulmonary TB unless pulmonary disease was reported as the major site of TB disease.

## Reporting of HIV Infection

Table 22 shows information on HIV status for TB cases among persons aged 25-44 years, the age group in which 75% of AIDS cases occur (CDC. *HIV/AIDS Surveillance Report* 1998;10[No. 2]:16). Information on HIV status for TB cases reported in 1998 is incomplete. Reasons for incomplete reporting of HIV test results to the national surveillance system include concerns about confidentiality, which may limit the exchange of data between TB and HIV/AIDS programs; laws and regulations in selected states and local jurisdictions that have been interpreted as prohibiting the HIV/AIDS program from sharing the HIV status of TB patients with the TB program, or from reporting patients with TB and AIDS to the TB program; and reluctance by health care providers to report HIV test results to the TB surveillance program staff. In addition, health care providers may not offer counseling and HIV testing to some TB patients because of a lack of resources or of appropriately trained staff, or due to the perception that selected patients (e.g., foreign-born persons) are not at risk for HIV infection.

Data on the HIV infection status of reported TB patients in 1998 should be interpreted with caution. These data are not representative of all TB patients with HIV infection. HIV testing is performed after a patient receives counseling and gives informed consent. Since testing is voluntary, some TB patients may decline HIV testing. TB patients who are tested anonymously may choose not to share the results of HIV testing with their health care provider. TB patients managed in the private sector may receive confidential HIV testing, but results may not be reported to the TB program in the health department. In addition, many factors may influence HIV testing of TB patients, including the extent to which testing is targeted or routinely offered to specific groups (e.g., 25-44 year old males, injecting drug users, homeless persons), and the availability and access to HIV testing services. These data do not provide a minimum estimate of the number of TB patients known to be HIV infected in a reporting area.

## Tabulation and Presentation of TB Data

This report primarily presents summary data for TB cases reported to CDC in 1998. Data from the RVCT Follow Up Report-2 (i.e., completion of therapy, the use of directly observed therapy, and the type of health care provider) are only presented for cases reported in 1996. TB cases are tabulated by the year in which the reporting area verified that the patient had TB and included the patient in its official annual TB case count. Totals for the U.S. only include data from the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and New York City. Age group tabulations are based on the patient's age in the month and year the patient was reported to the health department as a suspected TB case. State or metropolitan area data tabulations are based on the patient's residence at diagnosis of TB (see Appendix: "Recommendations for Counting Reported Tuberculosis Cases").

Tables 28 through 32 present data by metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) with an estimated 1998 population of 500,000 or more. Metropolitan areas are defined by the federal Office of Management and Budget, and the definitions effective as of June 30, 1998, were used for this publication ([www.census.gov/population/www.estimated/pastmetro.html](http://www.census.gov/population/www.estimated/pastmetro.html)). The metropolitan area definitions apply to all areas except the six New England states; for these states, the New England

County Metropolitan Areas (NECMAs) are used. Metropolitan areas are named for a central city in the MSA or NECMA, may include several cities and counties, and may cross state boundaries. For example, the TB cases and case rates presented for the District of Columbia in Table 6 include only persons residing within the geographic boundaries of the District. However, the TB cases and case rates for Washington, D.C., (Table 28) include persons residing within the several counties in the metropolitan area, including counties in Maryland, Virginia, and West Virginia. The cities and counties that comprised each metropolitan area in 1998 are available from the National Technical Information Service (1-800-553-NTIS, accession no. PB98-502198, Metropolitan Areas for 1998).

## **Rates**

Rates are expressed as the number of cases reported each calendar year per 100,000 population. Population denominators used in calculating TB rates (Table 6) are based on official postcensus estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau. The denominators for computing race-specific rates (Table 3) are based on 1998 estimates from the Population Projections Branch, Population Division, U.S. Census Bureau. The denominators for computing rates for foreign-born persons (Figure 10) are based on population estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau Current Population Report P20-507, *The Foreign-Born Population in the United States: March 1997 (Update)*, previous reports in this series, and the decennial census years of 1980 and 1990.

## **Mortality Data**

Official TB mortality statistics for the United States are compiled by the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), CDC. The annual mortality rate is calculated as the number of deaths due to TB in that year, divided by the estimated population for the year, multiplied by 100,000 (Table 1 and Figure 2). The number of deaths for 1997 was obtained from the NCHS *National Vital Statistics Report* (Vol. 47, No. 19), June 30, 1999. The number of deaths for 1998 was not available at the time of this publication.

## **Acknowledgments**

*This report was prepared by: Susan P. Danner, Gloria D. Kelly, Marisa Moore, M.D., Glenda T. Newell, Surveillance and Epidemiology Branch, Division of Tuberculosis Elimination, National Center for HIV, STD, and TB Prevention, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; and, Robert H. Pratt.<sup>3</sup> Others contributing to the production of this publication were: Alstead Forbes, Ken Long, Kathryn O'Toole, Computer and Statistics Branch; the Tuberculosis Information Management System Development and Support Teams;<sup>3</sup> and, John Jereb, M.D., Field Services Branch. Graphics support was provided by Brenda Holmes and Sylvia Ivill, Communications and Education Branch.*

*We also acknowledge the staff from state and local health departments throughout the United States who collected and reported the data used in this publication.*

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<sup>3</sup>CDC Information Systems Support Services contractor(s).